

The tax package Congress passed last year was only a first step. It is time for us to take more steps in that direction.

“SO-CALLED” CAMPAIGN FINANCE BILL

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I hope the Republican majority does not think that they can actually pass off their “so-called” campaign finance bill as genuine reform. The American people are much smarter. All they have to do is pick up the morning papers where newspaper editorial boards are calling their bluff.

The New York Times titles their piece “Campaign Finance Charades” and says, “Next, GINGRICH has a plan to snooker Americans yearning for a cleanup of their corrupt election finance system.”

The Times calls this bill “sham legislation dressed up to look like reform.” The Times is not alone. The Washington Post editorial, titled “Mocking Campaign Reform” says, “The leadership has put together a mock reform bill to create the impression of action, but none of the risk.”

We can go on and on and on. The League of Women Voters, Common Cause, every public group that has focused in on trying to clean up the campaign finance reform system agrees that the Republican proposal is a sham.

Let us pass McCain-Feingold II.

TAX REFORM

(Mr. KNOLLENBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, when considering the tax burden imposed on the American people today, I am reminded of an observation that was made by Mark Twain: “What’s the difference between a taxidermist and a tax collector? The taxidermist takes only your skin.”

According to the nonpartisan Tax Foundation, the average American family is now paying more in taxes than they spend on food, clothing, and shelter combined. That, I believe, is an outrage. Working families should be allowed to take care of their basic needs before being required to finance the whims of politicians.

Last year’s tax cut did improve the situation, but more work needs to be done. If we exercise the courage and discipline to cut wasteful spending and make the Federal Government more efficient, the American people can have some of their money back.

Mr. Speaker, let us do the right thing. Let us cut taxes again, this time for everybody, so working Americans can then keep more of their hard-earned money. They can spend their money better than we can. Let us allow them to do so.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Mr. SNYDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, a year ago many people in this House, in a bipartisan fashion, adopted the principle of let us do the doable, and began talking about putting together bipartisan campaign finance reform bills that deal with the problem of the large soft money donations. Instead, the Republican leadership has adopted the principle of let us kill the killable, and will put up a bill tomorrow that is a bill in name only, campaign finance reform.

They have put in provisions that have caused the League of Women Voters to call it a travesty, Common Cause to call it a hoax, the Washington Post to call it a mockery, and the New York Times to call it a charade.

This Republican bill is not leadership, it is not campaign finance reform, it is an embarrassment to this House.

TAX RELIEF FOR MIDDLE-CLASS AMERICANS

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, the Republican Party stands for tax relief for working Americans. We know middle-class families are getting killed by paying 50 percent of their income in direct and indirect tax, and what they get in return for those taxes suggests that the Government mocks their hard work that went into the earning of their wages.

But the possibility of enacting middle-class tax relief this year appears to be quite remote. The reason is because the President and the liberals here in the House refuse to cut spending. They refuse the means by which tax cuts are put on the table.

The President and his liberal allies in Congress do not believe that any more can be cut from the \$1.7 trillion budget, for they believe all those wonderful, big government programs are more important than giving middle-class families some real tax relief; and they do not want to offend their special interests that keep them in power.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is time to put the average middle-class American before the special interests. Let us rid the Government of more wasteful programs and fight for tax relief for middle-class Americans.

THE FIX IS IN

(Mr. ALLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, the fix is in. After the Republicans have spent millions of dollars in campaign finance investigations, now the Republican leadership has crafted their own cam-

paign finance reform bill. It comes to the floor tomorrow. The fix is in. It is not bipartisan. It is not reform. It is designed to fail.

This Republican leadership bill attacks unionized workers, it triples what wealthy individuals can give to candidates who are political parties in hard money. They say it bans soft money, but they are wrong. It does not. It allows the soft money races to go on at the State party level. The Freshman Task Force developed a bipartisan bill. It was a good bill. The Republican leadership will not let it come to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, the fix is in. Vote against the Republicans so-called campaign reform bill when it comes up tomorrow.

DREAM OF A DRUG-FREE AMERICA

(Ms. GRANGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, the poet Carl Sandburg once wrote that “Nothing happens unless first a dream.”

Today, as we confront the issue of drugs, I urge my colleagues to dream of a nation without drugs. Imagine schools where our children are not told it is cool to be high. Imagine streets where drug pushers are nowhere to be seen. And imagine a world where the scourge of drugs has been eliminated for good forever.

The issue of drugs deserves our immediate attention. In the 1990s, teenage drug use has nearly doubled. Nearly half of all 17-year-olds in our communities today say they can buy marijuana within an hour. That is not a problem. That is a crisis.

The good news is that today communities all across America are beginning to dream again and families are beginning to hope again. Why? Simply because millions of American families are more determined than ever to win the war on drugs. I believe our dream of a drug-free America can become a reality if we pursue a strategy based on simple principles. First, face the reality of drugs.

Principles such as empowering families to effectuate change. And principles such as protecting the victims and punishing the criminals.

Mr. Speaker, the drug crisis is real and rising. But I have always believed that what is wrong with America can be cured by all that is right with America. And that’s why I am so pleased to be a member of the Speaker’s Task Force for a Drug Free America.

I believe the war on drugs is one that can be won, must be won, and will be won, if only we have the courage to dream of a drug-free America. Together, we can save America from the scourge of drugs. One day at a time. One neighborhood at a time. And one child at a time.